

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1 through 22 (Canceled)

23. (Currently Amended) A multimedia client terminal adapted to generate graphical image data defining a facial image which is animated to simulate actions accompanying speech, the terminal comprising:

a receiver arranged to receive signals for processing by the terminal so as to retrieve data therein, said ~~signals~~ retrieved data comprising text defining the speech to be spoken and command data defining animations to accompany said speech;

storage means for storing ~~data defining vocal characteristics,~~ data defining facial characteristics and data defining facial animations; and

animated speech generating means responsive to said retrieved text and command data so as to generate said speech from said text and to select said facial animations and use said data ~~defining vocal characteristics and said data~~ defining facial characteristics to animate said speech.

24. (Currently Amended) A multimedia client terminal according to claim ~~1~~23, wherein the animated speech generating means is arranged to present said animated speech in conjunction with a graphical display of a face animated in accordance with said selected facial animation.

25. (Currently Amended) A multimedia client terminal according to claim ~~1~~23, wherein the facial animations include a talk animation, a smile animation and/or a wink animation.

26. (Currently Amended) A multimedia client terminal according to claim ~~1~~23, wherein the animated speech generating means is arranged to render the animated facial image in accordance with said facial characteristics.

27. (Currently Amended) A multimedia client terminal according to claim ~~1~~23, wherein the facial characteristics include skin color and hair color.

28. (Currently Amended) A multimedia client terminal according to claim ~~1~~23, wherein the storage means is arranged to store data defining vocal characteristics, wherein said animated speech generating means is arranged to use said data defining vocal characteristics to generate said speech, and wherein the vocal characteristics include voice gender, accent and language.

29. (Currently Amended) A multimedia client terminal according to claim 123, wherein the signals comprise a multimedia document including a predetermined markup specifying a vocal style and/or a facial image and data defining facial animations.

30. (Currently Amended) A multimedia client terminal according to claim 729, wherein the multimedia document includes data identifying a start and an end of said speech.

31. (Currently Amended) A multimedia client terminal according to claim 830, wherein the storage means is arranged to store data defining vocal characteristics, wherein the animated speech generating means is arranged to use said data defining vocal characteristics to generate said speech, and is arranged to select default facial characteristics and default vocal characteristics in response to reaching the end of the speech.

32. (Currently Amended) A multimedia client terminal according to claim 123, wherein the storage means is arranged to store data defining vocal characteristics, wherein said animated speech generating means is arranged to use said data defining vocal characteristics to generate said speech, and wherein said facial characteristics and vocal characteristics are selectable by a user of the terminal.

33. (Currently Amended) A multimedia client terminal according to claim 123, wherein the terminal comprises a mobile communications terminal, and the receiver is arranged to receive said signals via a radio interface.

34. (Currently Amended) A multimedia client terminal adapted to generate graphical image data defining a facial image which is animated to simulate actions accompanying speech, the terminal comprising:

a receiver arranged to receive signals for processing by the terminal so as to retrieve data therein, said ~~signals~~ retrieved data comprising data defining the speech to be spoken and command data defining animations to accompany said speech, said command data being independent of said data defining the speech to be spoken;

~~storage means for storing data defining vocal characteristics,~~ data defining facial characteristics and data defining facial animations; and

animated speech generating means responsive to said retrieved command data so as to select said facial animations and use ~~said data defining vocal characteristics and said data defining facial characteristics~~ to animate said speech.

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35. (New) A multimedia client terminal according to claim 23, wherein said speech is generated using text-to-speech processing.

36. (New) A multimedia client terminal according to claim 34, wherein said data defining the speech to be spoken comprises text.

37. (New) A multimedia client terminal according to claim 36, wherein said speech is generated using text-to-speech processing.

38. (New) A multimedia client terminal according to claim 34, wherein said data defining the speech to be spoken comprises a tag.

39. (New) A multimedia client terminal according to claim 38, wherein said speech is generated using at least one pre-stored audio file associated with said tag.